Commonwealth leaders vow to keep seeking reparations after Reform UK plan to halt visas
***Chris Osuh, The Guradian*, 3rd April 2026**

Commonwealth politicians say they will not back down from seeking reparations as UK public figures warn Reform UK's pledge to "punish" countries seeking justice for slavery would harm and isolate Britain. This week, Reform UK said they would halt visas for nationals of countries formally demanding reparations from Britain if they took power.

Arley Gill, the head of Grenada Reparations Commission, said: "It is not funny that they think after years of invading and colonising a people that they think a British visa for those same people is a privilege."

Last month a resolution spearheaded by Ghana, which described the historical transatlantic trafficking and enslavement of Africans as "the gravest crime against humanity" and called for reparations, was passed by the UN general assembly.

Zia Yusuf, Reform's home affairs spokesperson, said on Monday the UK was being "ridiculed on the world stage". "While countries like Jamaica, Nigeria and Ghana ramp up their demands for reparations, the Westminster establishment has rewarded them. Enough is enough," he said. Sri Lanka, where Yusuf's parents migrated from, is among countries seeking colonial redress from the UK.

On Tuesday, Ralph Gonsalves, the opposition leader and former prime minister of St Vincent and Grenadines, accused Farage of "doing an imitative Trump" and "seeking another cultural wedge issue" that "will certainly isolate Britain further." "For us in the Caribbean , the present is the past because of the legacy of underdevelopment, which can be sourced to native genocide and the enslavement of African bodies."

The UK has never formally apologised for slavery.

Last month, the UK and Nigeria agreed a £746m deal in which the UK would provide loan financing to refurbish two major ports in Lagos. The deal includes a £70m contract for loss-making British Steel in Lincolnshire, which has a Reform UK mayor.

Antoinette Fernandez, the global majority Greens reparations officer, said: "Britain outlawed slavery because consistent slave uprisings made it no longer profitable. "Reparative justice is about correcting not just the wrongs of the past but the ongoing exploitation of African countries – a large majority of which still provide natural resources and goods to Europe for which they are consistently shortchanged."

Bell Ribeiro-Addy, a Labour MP said Reform's policy was a "ridiculous provocation", adding "reparatory justice was never simply about money. The demand is for acknowledgment, truth-telling and structural repair." She added: "Some still believe they sit at the head of a table the rest of the world was never invited to. The world is changing."

Clive Lewis, the Labour MP for Norwich South, said: "The total death toll (of slavery) may exceed 20 million. We confront that history honestly not as an act of self-flagellation but because the alternative – the insistence that power never has to account for itself – is exactly the logic that makes atrocities possible in every generation."

Since Brexit, the UK has turned again to former African, Caribbean and Asian colonies to fill skills shortages in teaching, health, social care and the Prison Service.

Keir Starmer has previously said the UK would not pay reparations, but No 10 has indicated the country could support some forms of reparatory justice, such as restructuring financial institutions and debt relief.